Caring For the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness

Like many pristine areas, the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness is endangered by heavy use. Some fragile country vegetation is being worn away. Dust, charcoal, and fire-blackened stones accumulate at favorite spots.

The following principles help preserve Wilderness qualities:

Be sure to check the trailhead sign boards for current rules and other information about the Wilderness. The complete list of management regulations for the area may also be reviewed at the Forest Supervisor or Ranger District offices.

The Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness has a **party size limit** of not more than 12 persons and 18 head of pack or saddle stock. Larger parties have greater impacts on the land and intrude on the wilderness experience of others.

Do not graze, hitch, tether, or hobble any pack or saddle livestock within **200 feet** of any meadow, lake, stream, or trail.

Possessing or transporting unprocessed hay or grain (livestock feed) is prohibited in the Wilderness. These products can carry noxious weeds. **Use certified weed-free hay or processed (cubed) grain.**

Caching or storing of equipment, personal property, or supplies is prohibited. Caching is defined as leaving equipment unattended for more than 48 hours.

Motorized and mechanical **vehicles, bicycles, and equipment are prohibited.** This includes all wheeled conveyances.

Landing **aircraft**, or dropping or picking up any material, supplies, or person by means of aircraft is not allowed.

Forest Service photograph

Alpine Ecology

Moisture is a limiting factor for both the growth and numbers of treeline and alpine plants in the Wilderness. The thin sandy soils on high steep slopes store very little water.

In the fall, winter, and spring, ground and surface water are usually unavailable to plants. In summer, dry winds cause evaporation of water in the plant leaves. To adapt, alpine plants grow low to the ground, have fewer and smaller leaves, and have fuzzy leaf surfaces to help catch and hold water, much like desert plants.

Because the growing season is short, and most alpine soils are shallow and rocky, it takes many years for the plants to grow even a little bit. Only hardy plants can survive. **Once plants are damaged** by wind, frost, or trampling, they are extremely slow to recover.

Serious damage by people can destroy the plant cover, and weather can break down the surface through freezing and thawing. The soil is carried away the next summer by wind or water. **It takes nature a long time**—thousands of years—to repair lost soil on alpine settings.

Revegetation

Wilderness rangers and volunteers are trying to speed up the recovery process in areas that have been damaged by human activity. The first step is to eliminate further erosion using water bars, check dams, and erosion control blankets.

Next, the soil is **improved.** Breaking up soil compaction, adding logs, branches, and twigs to the soil as a source of organic matter, and in more extreme cases, hauling in replacement dirt from a borrow pit **seems** to help. In a few areas, native species are transplanted from nearby.

But even after all this, **recovery** in the alpine environment is extremely slow. People and livestock need to **keep off these** areas for many years.

Do your part: Please help out by staying out of areas signed, roped off with string, or barricaded by logs, branches, or rocks.

Forest Service photograph

Wildlife of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness

From the smallest of the many species of insects to the largest of land mammals like moose, deer, and bear, many kinds of wildlife inhabit the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. Watching and photographing wildlife is exciting and an important element of the Wilderness experience. For our protection and that of the wildlife, it is vital that we respect their habits and territory. This is best done by keeping a safe distance, and by not disturbing any of these amazing creatures.

We receive many questions about bears in the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. The following are some tips for camping in bear country:

Food Storage: Keep your camp clean. Store food, garbage, cooking gear, and cosmetics properly at all times. Place in a bag, backpack, or pannier and hang from a tree branch. The storage container should hang at least 10 feet above the ground and at least 4 feet out from the tree trunk. Do not use stuff sacks from sleeping bags or tents for storing these items. Never store any of these items in your tent.

Garbage: Deposit garbage in bear proof containers where available. Otherwise, pack it out. Never bury or burn garbage.

Cooking: Design your camp to keep sleeping area, tent, sleeping bags and personal gear at least 100 feet uphill from the cooking area. Never cook in your tent. Keep sleeping bags and personal gear free of food odors. Do not sleep in the clothing you wore while cooking.

Hunting and Fishing: Where hunting is permitted, store game meat the same way as food. (See above.)

Horses: Store horse pellets the same way you store food.

Camping: Choose another camping area if you see bears, dead animals, or bear signs such as tracks, droppings or diggings. Be alert!

Dogs: They can disturb a bear and lead it back to you. If dogs are permitted in the area, don't allow your dog to run free.

Forest Service photograph

Photo by Mitch Bullock

Leave No Trace

Minimum impact techniques are tools for using the Wilderness without making your stay felt by the land or other visitors. These techniques assure that those who follow you will have the same freedom to use the Wilderness that you do.

Trails: Shortcutting a switchback or avoiding a muddy trail causes multiple trails. The cost of repairing switchbacks may mean the difference between opening and not opening another trail.

If you choose cross-country travel, you need to be prepared and experienced. Part of the challenge of wilderness is finding your own way; please don't mark your path with blazes or ribbons.

Campsites: The choice of campsites is one of the most important decisions you will make in the Wilderness. The goal is to leave nothing and take only memories.

Pick campsites that can stand the use. Meadows, lakeshores and streamsides area easily disturbed. Make your camp on level ground and restrict your impact to as small an area as possible.

Camp at least 200 feet from meadows, lakes, streams and trails. Try to pick previously-used sites. Dry grasses and grasslike plants are more resistant to trampling. Sites with no vegetation at all are recommended.

Use of a stove is preferable. Keep any cooking or warming fire ***small!*** Burn all burnables completely.

Do not bury camp waste. Animals usually dig it up again. Carry out cans, foil, bottles, and all non-burnables. Pick up litter left by careless campers and return campsites to a ***natural*** condition.

Be easy with the trees...never chop or saw on standing trees, snags, or down logs that are larger in diameter than your arm. If there is insufficient dead wood lying about, you should probably be using a stove.

Washing: Take care to avoid water pollution while washing.

Avoid putting anything into lakes or streams that you would not like to eat or drink!

Taking baths in lakes or streams is okay provided no soap or detergent is used.

Wash dishes and clothes at least **100 feet** from lakes and streams. Dispose of wastewater away from places where people travel or camp, and away from water sources.

Sanitation: Use nature's "biological disposer," the top layer of soil.

Find a screened spot away from where people travel or camp, at least 100 feet from open water. Dig a hole 8 to 10 inches in diameter and 6 to 8 inches deep. After use, refill the hole with loose soil and replace the sod. Nature will do the rest.

Horses and Pack Stock: Riding and using pack stock are traditional activities in the Wilderness. Both were used to explore much of the Cascades. The areas that have been preserved as Wildernesses and Parks must be used wisely if they are to last.

Stock can cause damage to trails and campsites if the handler is not skilled or wise in backcountry use techniques. Here are some tips that can help minimize the damage done by stock to the soil, the plants and the water sources:

Water will remain pure if livestock are kept at least 200 feet away from shorelines when not watering them. A rocky spot is a good place to water stock.

Keeping stock well away from camp will **keep the camping area clean and the vegetation alive.**

To **minimize damage** to plants and soil, restrain stock by using a hitchline tied between two trees (made of material that will not dig into the tree bark and injure the tree), a picket line in a grazing area, or hobbles. Let your stock graze untethered if they will stay in the area.

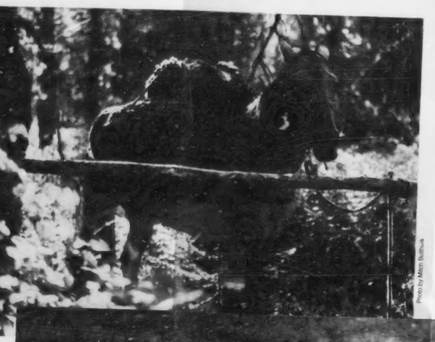
Do not tie horses to trees for more that just a short while. (For example, a lunch stop qualifies as "**a short while**".) If you tie to a tree use one which is at least 8 inches in diameter to minimize damage to the bark.

Choose pelletized feed or rolled grain, rather than hay for horse feed. It will prevent the spread of noxious weed seeds in wilderness.

Lightweight camping equipment like backpacking stoves and tents are good for horse travelers as well as hikers. Fewer stock are needed to carry supplies, and less stress is placed on the land.

Before leaving camp, scatter all manure to enhance decomposition and as a courtesy to others.

Go single file on the trail so trails do not widen and multiply.



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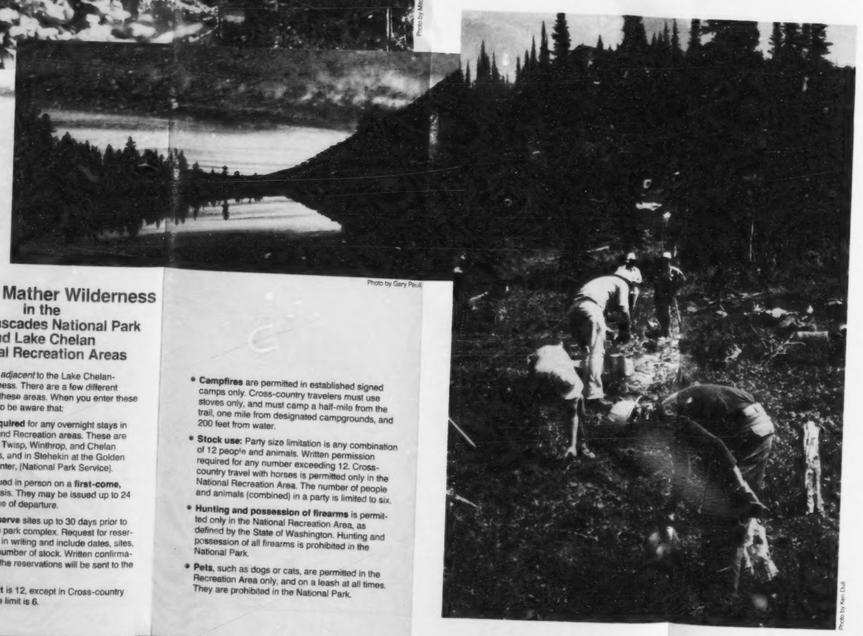


Photo by Gary Paull

Photo by Ken Dull

Stephen Mather Wilderness in the North Cascades National Park and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas

These areas are *adjacent* to the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. There are a few different requirements for these areas. When you enter these areas, you need to be aware that:

- **A permit is required** for any overnight stays in National Park and Recreation areas. These are available at the Twisp, Winthrop, and Chelan Ranger Stations, and in Stehekin at the Golden West Visitor Center, (National Park Service).
- Permits are issued in person on a **first-come, first-served** basis. They may be issued up to 24 hours in advance of departure.
- Visitors may **reserve** sites up to 30 days prior to their entry to the park complex. Request for reservations must be in writing and include dates, sites, party size, and number of stock. Written confirmation or denial of the reservations will be sent to the visitor.
- **Group size limit** is 12, except in Cross-country Area II where the limit is 6.
- **Campfires** are permitted in established signed camps only. Cross-country travelers must use stoves only, and must camp a half-mile from the trail, one mile from designated campgrounds, and 200 feet from water.
- **Stock use:** Party size limitation is any combination of 12 people and animals. Written permission required for any number exceeding 12. Cross-country travel with horses is permitted only in the National Recreation Area. The number of people and animals (combined) in a party is limited to six.
- **Hunting and possession of firearms** is permitted only in the National Recreation Area, as defined by the State of Washington. Hunting and possession of all firearms is prohibited in the National Park.
- **Pets**, such as dogs or cats, are permitted in the Recreation Area only, and on a leash at all times. They are prohibited in the National Park.

Safe Travel in the Wilderness

A visit to the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness will be more enjoyable if you are properly prepared, informed, appropriately equipped, and in good physical condition.

Before you start your wilderness trip, ***tell someone*** your proposed route of travel and when you will return, and be sure to let them know you have returned. Find out the current conditions on your route, and prepare for them. Remember that sudden storms are always possible, even in summer.

Always carry the "**ten essentials**" even for a day hike:

1. Map of the area.
2. compass.
3. flashlight (extra bulb and batteries).
4. extra food.
5. rain gear and extra clothing (socks, sweater, etc.).
6. sunglasses and sunburn protection.
7. first aid kit.
8. pocket knife.
9. matches (in waterproof container); and
10. candle or fire starter.

Footwear should be broken in and fit comfortably. It should provide support and traction appropriate to the conditions. After a day of hiking, wearing tennis shoes in camp will be easier on your feet and on the land.

Clothing should give good protection from wind, cold, rain, and fog. A wind-proof parka plus several layers (including wool or synthetic pile), provide combinations of insulation for any conditions. Always carry rain gear and a hat. Pack your sleeping bag and clothes so they will stay dry in any weather.

Hypothermia (the critical loss of body heat) is the most common killer in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. If storms threaten your survival, find a sheltered spot in the trees to set up your tent or tarp. (You are best off near a trail at low elevation, but don't risk getting lost or exhausted, or breaking a secure camp to get there.) Start a fire if you can. Don't get out your dry clothes or sleeping bag until you are sure you can keep them dry, and pack them up dry before you go back out in the rain. Wool and polypropylene retain some warmth when wet; cotton and down lose all their insulating abilities when wet. Hot drinks (NOT alcohol) help keep you warm. Bodily contact with another person preserves warmth, and is the treatment of choice in a true hypothermia emergency.

Carry your map where you can consult it frequently. Pay attention to where you are before you get lost!

Water Words

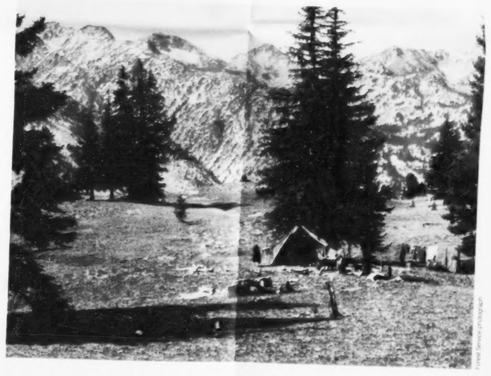
The cold, clear running streams of North Cascades may harbor Giardia lamblia, a protozoa and other bacteria or germs which are common causes of backpackers diarrhea. To protect yourself, it is recommended that you use commercial treatment tablets, filters, or boil the water vigorously for five minutes. Or on day hikes pack your own tap water.

Boat Information

The **Lady of the Lake** offers daily boat service along Lake Chelan during the summer months. From October 16 through April 14 the Lady operates on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday only.

The boat can be boarded at Chelan or from Field's Point Landing. Both facilities charge fees for parking. The Lady leaves Chelan at 8:30 a.m. and Fields Point at 9:45 a.m. If you know when you'll be returning to Chelan or Fields Point be sure to let the folks on the boat know of your plans for pickup. When returning down lake from either Prince Creek or Moore Point (the two access points along the lake into the wilderness), you must signal the boat to stop by waving. Even if you have notified the boat company of your scheduled departure from these "flag stops", ***the boat will not stop to pick you up unless you "flag" it down.***

Once in Stehekin, the North Cascades National Park offers a shuttle bus to various trailheads into the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. For more information on the Lady of the Lake, call 509-682-2224. Chelan Airways also offers service up Lake Chelan. For information call 509-682-5555.



Forest Service photograph

Forest Service photograph

If You Get Lost

Keep calm. Do not walk aimlessly. Sit down and size up the situation. Try to remember how you got to where you are.

To find your location, climb to a place where you can see the surrounding country. Pay attention to any prominent landmarks.

Decide whether to stay or push on.

STAY if you are injured, nearing exhaustion, or know someone will be looking for you soon; if the terrain is rugged, if nightfall or bad weather is close, or if shelter is available.

PUSH ON only if it is daylight and good weather; if you are still strong enough and reasonably sure of finding your way to a trail, camp, or road (outside the Wilderness).

If you move on, first study the area from a high point and plan your route.

Go slowly and carefully.

If you have a map and compass, use them. If not, use landmarks to keep constant track of where you are and where you're going.

As a last resort, follow a drainage downstream; this can be hard going, but will often lead to a trail.

If you are on a trail, don't leave it without **clearly marking where you left and which way you went.**

Survival—if you are injured or lost, unable to proceed, and have to wait for help:

Make a sheltered camp before nightfall. Camp away from exposed ridges or open flats, preferably in dense forest, rock formations or caves, or behind trees, rocks or other natural barriers.

Build a signal warming fire. Conserve your matches. Use only dry, dead wood and tinder. Adding wet leaves or green branches will create more smoke once you have a good fire burning.

Use an SOS! The nationwide SOS call is a series of three signals of any kind (three gunshots, three puffs of smoke, three flashes from a flashlight or mirror, and so on). If seen by a search party, your SOS will be answered by two signals.

For More Information

We welcome you to write or call any of these offices for information about the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness:

Forest Supervisor
Okanogan National Forest
P.O. Box 950
Okanogan, WA 98840
(509) 422-2704

Twisp Ranger District
P.O. Box 188
Twisp, WA 98856
(509) 997-2131

Winthrop Ranger District
P.O. Box 579
Winthrop, WA 98862
(509) 996-2266

Forest Supervisor
Wenatchee National Forest
301 Yakima Street
P.O. Box 811
Wenatchee, WA 98801
(509) 662-4335

U.S Forest Service
National Park Service
Chelan Ranger District
P.O. Box 186
Chelan, WA 98816
(509) 682-2576

Park Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284
(206) 856-5700 or, for backcountry permits, call the Skagit and Wilderness District Office
Marblemount, WA 98267
(206) 873-4500

Any person who violates any rule or regulation of the Secretary of Agriculture may be subject to the penalties provided by the Act of June 20, 1910 (36 Stat. 857, 16 U.S.C. 551). Violation of any rule or regulation of the Secretary of Agriculture may also be subject to the penalties provided by the Act of June 20, 1910 (36 Stat. 857, 16 U.S.C. 551).

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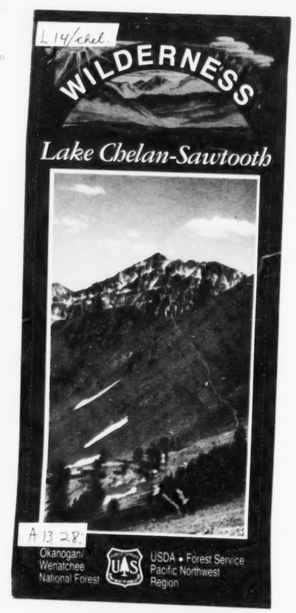

Okanogan
Wenatchee
National Forest

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Pacific Northwest
Region

Wilderness

Wilderness is a piece of the Earth protected from human intervention, where the land and its community of life are untrammeled, where people are visitors who do not remain. People come to the Wilderness to contemplate nature, to feel solitude, and to rough it in the wild outdoors.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 let some established human uses of the land continue in Wilderness. Livestock grazing, hunting, and some mining are still allowed. One band of sheep grazes in a portion of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth every odd-numbered year, and cattle use ranges in Wolf Creek yearly. Commercial outfitters and guides take hunters and visitors into the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. These activities are reviewed and monitored by Forest Service workers.

Forest Service photograph

The Lake Chelan-Sawtooth

Forest Service photograph

was designated Wilderness in 1984. The diverse mixture of dense forest, lush meadows, alpine slopes, geology and the high country motivates visitors to climb from the lowland trailheads through the gorges and forest. It draws backpackers, horsepackers, fishermen, and hunters.

Approximately 194 miles of trails lead into 146,000 acres of the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness. The major trailheads are located along the North Cascades Highway (State Highway 20); the Twisp River on the northeast; Cooper Mountain and Grade Creek Roads to the south; and Lake Chelan on the southwest.

Gain what you can from your excursion in the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wilderness, but leave the land unaltered for others, for future generations, and for Wilderness itself.

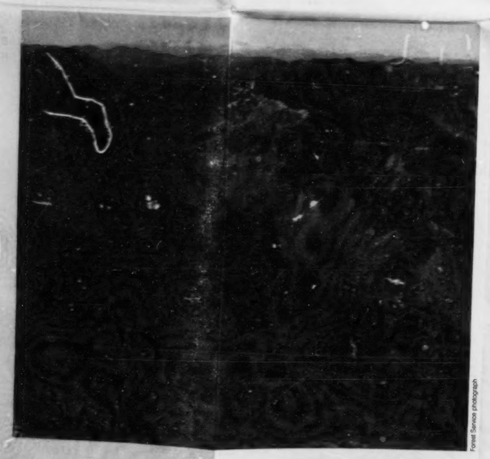

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Photo by Ken Cole

R. 17 E. R. 18 E. R. 19 E. R. 20 E. R. 21 E.

T. 36 N. T. 35 N. T. 34 N. T. 33 N. T. 32 N. T. 31 N.

Lake Chelan - Sawtooth Wilderness
Trailhead Facilities

No.	Trailhead	Trail Name	Trail Number	Unloading Dock	Hitch Rail	Corral	Camping	Toilet	Comments
1	Cedar Creek	Cedar Creek	476						
2	Wolf Creek	Wolf Creek	527	X	X			X	
3	Gilbert	North Creek	413						
		Twisp Pass	432	X	X			X	
		Twisp River	446						
4	South Creek	South Creek	401		X				
		Twisp River	440						
5	Scatter	Scatter	427			X			
6	Twisp River	Twisp River	440						
7	Twisp River Horse Camp	Twisp River	446	X	X	X	X	X	
8	Reynolds Creek	Reynolds Creek	402						
9	Williams Lake	Williams Lake	427						
10	Slate Lake	Slate Lake	414						
		Twisp River	440						
11	War Creek	War Creek	408	X	X				
12	Eagle Oval	Eagle Oval	410	X	X				
13	Scaffold Ridge	Scaffold Ridge	436						
14	West Fork Buttermilk	West Fork Buttermilk	411						
15	East Fork Buttermilk	East Fork Buttermilk	420						
16	Libby Lake	Libby Lake	415						
17	Crater Creek	Crater Creek	416	X	X	X	X	X	
18	Foggy Dew	Foggy Dew	417	X	X			X	
19	Summer Blossom	Summer Blossom	1284						
20	South Navarre	Summit	1269	X	X				
21	Safety Harbor	Safety Harbor	1261	X				X	
22	Prince Creek	Fish Creek Prince Creek	1267 1265					X	Docks and Ferry Flag Stop
23	Moore Point	Fish Creek Lake Shore	1247 1246					X	Dock and Ferry Flag Stop

NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

STEPHEN P. MATHER WILDERNESS

LAKE CHELAN SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS

LAKE CHELAN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

GLACIER PEAK WILDERNESS

WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST

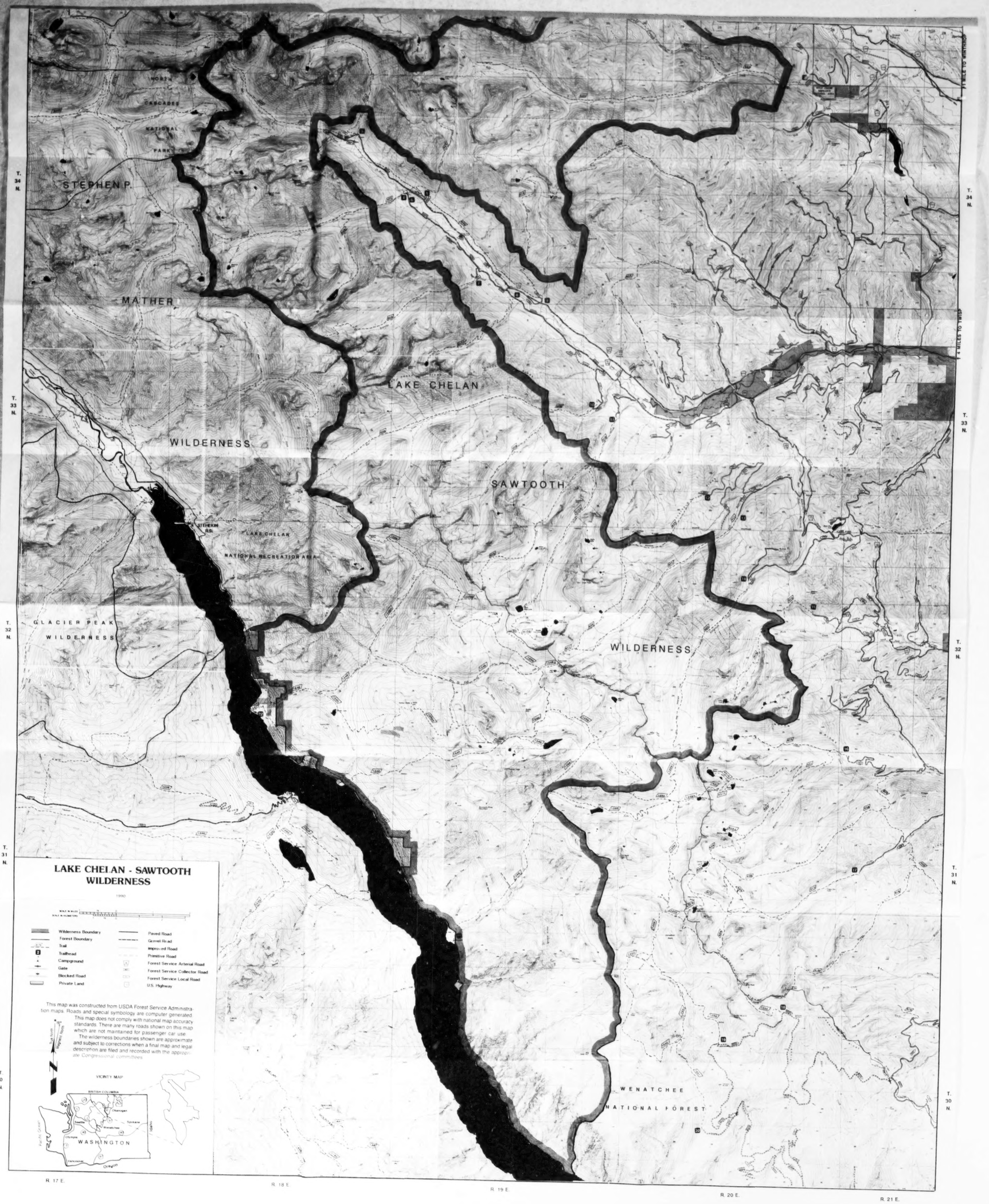
STEHEKIN R.S.

LAKE CHELAN - SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS

1990

- Wilderness Boundary
- Forest Boundary
- Trail
- Trailhead
- Campground
- Gate
- Blocked Road
- Private Land
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Improved Road
- Primitive Road
- Forest Service Arterial Road
- Forest Service Collector Road
- Forest Service Local Road
- U.S. Highway

This map was constructed from USDA Forest Service Administration maps. Roads and special symbology are computer generated. This map does not comply with national map accuracy standards. There are many roads shown on this map which are not maintained for passenger car use. The wilderness boundaries shown are approximate and subject to corrections when a final map and legal description are filed with the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of the United States Congress and the Committee on Agriculture of the United States House of Representatives.


NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK
STEPHEN P.
MATHER
LAKE CHELAN
WILDERNESS
SAWTOOTH
WILDERNESS
LAKE CHELAN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
STEHEKIN R.D.
GLACIER PEAK WILDERNESS
WILDERNESS
WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST
T. 34 N.
T. 33 N.
T. 32 N.
T. 31 N.
T. 30 N.
R. 17 E.
R. 18 E.
R. 19 E.
R. 20 E.
R. 21 E.
LAKE CHELAN - SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS
1990
Wilderness Boundary
Forest Boundary
Trail
Trailhead
Campground
Gate
Blocked Road
Private Land
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VICINITY MAP
BRITISH COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
Pacific Ocean
Idaho
Oregon